

36. ON THE IDENTITY AND SYNONYMY OF *HEDYOTIS*
CONGESTA R. BR. (RUBIACEAE)

The genus *Metabolos* was postulated by Blume (1826) for reception of a group of species allied to *Hedyotis auricularia* L. which, later on, has been found to be conspecific with *M. venosus* Bl.

Korthals (1851) synonymised all the species of *Metabolos* to *Hedyotis* sect. *Hedyotis*.

Hooker f. (1880) followed Korthals in reducing *Metabolos* species to *Hedyotis* except *M. rugosus* Bl. which he considered as distinct from *Hedyotis* but identical with a Sri Lankan plant described by Thwaites (1859) as *Allaeophania decipiens* Thw.

As all other species of *Metabolos* have been transferred to *Hedyotis*, Hochreutiner (1934) suggested that the name *Metabolos* might be retained for *M. rugosus* Bl. on restricting its generic delimitation. This choice must be regarded as legitimate and therefore the genus *Allaeophania* Thw. becomes superfluous. Bremekamp (1939) proposed a new generic name *Exallage* for accommodating *H. auricularia* and allied species. But Fosberg (1943) and Bakhuizen (1965) rightly did not recognize this genus as distinct for cogent reasons.

Metabolos rigidus Blume (1826) described from Java was characterised by elliptic-oblong leaves acuminate at both ends, flowers in involucrate clustered heads and campanulate calyx. It was transferred to the genus *Hedyotis* L. by Miquel (1857). *H. carnosa* Korth. (1851) was described from Sumatra and Borneo, and was characterised by oblong-ovate, acuminate leaves, lacinate stipules and ovate, acute calyx lobes. In course of taxonomic revision of Indian *Hedyotis*, we have, on the basis of the study of types and other specimens of these taxa observed that the leaves are variable in shape and size, cymes few to many flowered and calyx campanulate or lobes ovate, round-

ed, obtuse or acute. For these reasons distinctions of these taxa are not tenable. King (1903) while distinguishing *H. congesta* R. Br. ex G. Don var. *nicobarica* King from the typical variety by narrowly elliptic-lanceolate leaves tapering at both ends, noted (in Sched.) that his specimen is like *H. carnosa*. On the other hand characters on which King (l.c.) distinguished his var. *nicobarica* are evident on the type specimens of the typical variety. Therefore this variety *nicobarica* also does not stand.

Merrill (Enum. Philipp. Fl. Pl. 3: 500. 1923) reduced *H. leucocarpa* Elm. occurring in Philippine to *H. rigida* (Bl.) Miq. Bakhuizen in Backer & Bakhuizen, Fl. Java 2: 288. 1965, accepted this reduction but treated *H. leucocarpa* Elm. as the correct name since *H. rigida* is already preoccupied. Specimens named as *H. leucocarpa* Elm. in herb. CAL show distinction from *H. rigida* in thinner leaves, long fimbriate calyx lobes and larger fruit. But as the type specimen of *H. leucocarpa* Elm. was not available to us it could not be definitely established if these are taxonomically same or distinct, therefore *H. leucocarpa* is not considered here in the synonymy. Even if it is synonymous *H. congesta* being the earliest valid and effective publication amongst all the names involved, is the correct name, and the synonymy is given as follows.

Hedyotis congesta R. Br. ex G. Don, Gen. Syst. Gard. Bot. 3: 526: 1834 (Type: Penang, 1822, *Wall. Cat.* 844 K-W microfiche CAL!); Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 3: 61. 1880; King & Gamble in Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng. 72(2): 161. 1903. *Oldenlandia congesta* (R. Br.) O. Ktze. Rev. Gen. Pl. 1: 2. 1891. *Exallage congesta* (R. Br.) Bremek. in Verh. Kon. Netherl. Akad. Wet. Afd.-Natuurk. ser. 2, 48(2): 142.

1951. *H. argentea* Wall. ex G. Don, Gen. Syst. Gard. Bot. 3: 526. 1834 (Type: Paulo Penang, 1822, *Wall. Cat.* 858 CAL!). *Metabolos rigidus* Bl. Bijdr. 992. 1826 (Type: Java, *Blume s.n.* L!). *H. rigida* (Bl.) Miq. Fl. Ind. Bat. 2: 181. 1857, non (Benth.) Walp. 1851. *H. congesta* R. Br. var *nicobarica* King in Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng. 72(2): 161. 1903 (Type: Nicobar, 1884, *King* 506 CAL!), SYN. NOV. *H. carnosa* Korthals in Nederl. Kruidk. Arch. 2(2): 161.

1852 (Type: Sumatra, *Korthals s.n.* L!), non Dalz. 1850.

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37. A NOTE ON THE *BRACHYSTELMA GLABRUM* HOOK. F. (ASCLEPIADACEAE) FROM SOUTH INDIA

Gamble in his Flora of Presidency of Madras has dealt with six species of the genus *Brachystelma* R. Br. and most of them are restricted to south India. Two new species of the above genus have been described and published by Govindappa Arekal & T. M. Ramakrishna (*B. ciliatum* in *Current Science* 50(3): 145-146. 1981; *B. kolarensis* in the *Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Science (Plant Science)* 90: 203-205. 1981) from Karnataka state. Hooker dealt with seven species of this genus in the Flora of British India which include four species described by Gamble.

Most of the species dealt with by Gamble are not represented in the herbarium of Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore (MH). Due to their restricted distribution, tiny nature of the species, tubers being eaten away (evidenced by the disturbed habitat) by wild animals like hare, rats, Wild boar etc. grazing and trampling by domestic as well as wild animals are some of the probable reasons for their poor representation in herbaria.

However I could locate one of the species, *Brachystelma glabrum* Hook. f. among the grass patches along water drips on open rocky slopes in Shevaroy hills, Salem district, Tamil Nadu when I visited the hills for collection of rare/endemic/threatened plants under the Project on Study Survey and Conservation of Endangered species of Flora (POSSCEF). This is one of the rare endemic species of south India, not represented in MH. Hence a short description is given below for better understanding as well as for recording the new location of this rare species. The specimens have been deposited in MH. A few live plants with tubers have been introduced in the experimental garden, Botanical Survey of India, Yercaud.

Brachystelma glabrum Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 4: 65. 1883; Gamble Fl. Pres. Madras 598. 1957 (repr. ed.) (ASCLEPIADACEAE).

A short slender, glabrous, tuberous herb with erect stems up to 10-15 cm high; branches 2-3 at top. Tubers globose to some what flat, 2.5-4.0 × 1.5-2.5 cm. Leaves 4-16, 3-5 cm,